



RESEARCH NOTE

Research Services

Vol. 0801
November 2008

Dr. Terry Froman, Supervisor

Topic: Revisions in Florida’s High School Accountability System

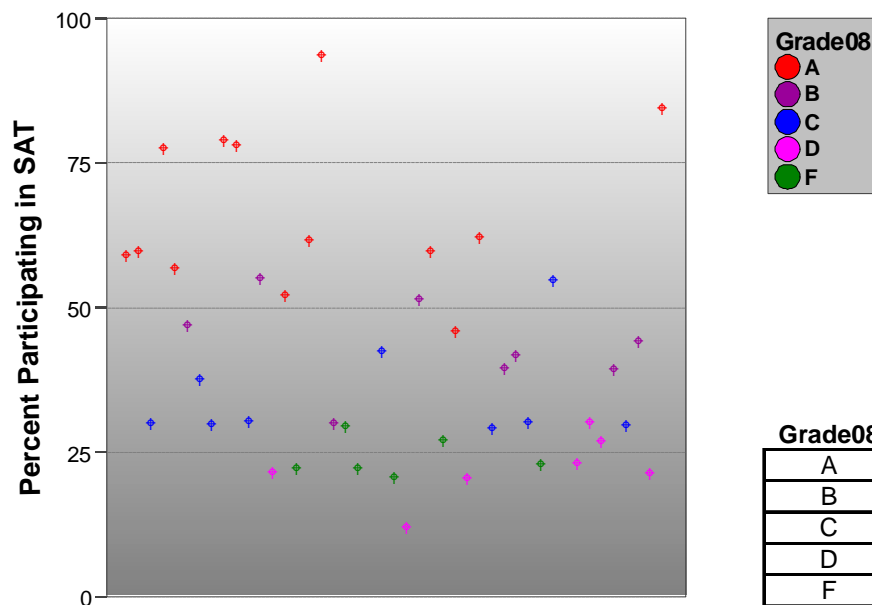
Focus: Postsecondary readiness of students as measured by the SAT, ACT, or CPT.

Purpose: To provide input to the state concerning changes in policy affecting the calculation of school grades.

Senate Bill 1908 includes additional criteria for designating school grades for senior high schools with grades 9 through 12 or 10 through 12. Beginning in 2009-10, 50% of the school’s grade will be based on the existing FCAT-related factors and the remaining 50% will be based on other factors including graduation rates, participation in accelerated coursework, and postsecondary readiness as measured by participation in college admission tests.

Reactions to the proposal for the Postsecondary Readiness component acknowledge that not all students take the SAT, ACT, or CPT. The participation rates in Miami-Dade high schools varies considerably across schools that have received different school grades.

Overall Participation Rates

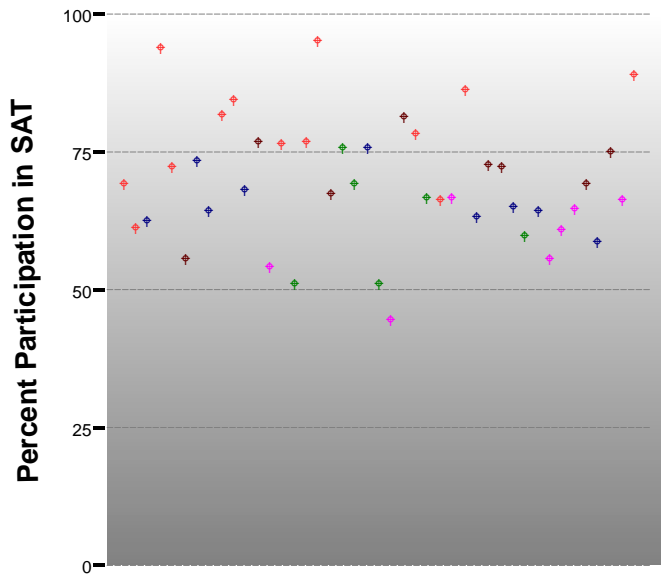


Grade08	Mean % Participation	N
A	65.8	13
B	42.4	8
C	33.8	9
D	21.1	7
F	23.0	6

It would seem unfair to double-penalize low-performing schools by imposing overall participation standards on tests that are voluntary, cost-connected, and do not conform to the practical academic aspirations of many of their students.

Proposed: If the law requires consideration of college admission test participation, perhaps it should be based only on those students who have shown academic proficiency by scoring at levels 3 or higher on both the FCAT Reading and Mathematics tests.

Participation Rates for Students in Levels 3+



Grade08	Mean % Participation	N
A	78.2	13
B	70.2	8
C	65.1	9
D	57.9	7
F	61.2	6

It can be seen that, for the subset of “academically proficient” students, the participation rates are far more equitable across school grades. Although being held accountable for college admission test participation would still be challenging for lower performing schools, encouraging greater participation among these high-performing students would be in keeping with the overall spirit of the school accountability system.

Note: The data depicted in these graphs are the most current SAT participation indicators for M-DCPS students and the School Grades assigned to the high schools at the end of the 2007-08 school year.